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BERLINER RUDERCLUB OBERSPREE

Berliner Ruder-Club Oberspree

1905-1938

Submitted by

Irene Liebenau Zuckerbraun

Jerry Liebenau

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The Rowing Club "Oberspree" was founded in 1905. It was so named because it was located along the upper part of the river Spree in Ober Schoeneweide about eight miles south-east of Schoeneberg. To one side of the club was a rather elegant German Christian Club "Sturmvogel"; to the other side was a club of members who were blind. The club had a membership of fifty men and their families. Since it's major purpose was rowing, the facilities were simply functional, created to answer the basic needs of the members and their families. For sleeping purposes there were two long sheds offering beds and bathroom facilities. The houses were well equipped and comfortable enough to allow families to spend a night or two, as desired.

The main building was also constructed basically, housing a kitchen and large assembly room for meetings and socializing. The building was divided in half lengthwise, the other half storing the row boats.

Most of the boats were single, two, four and one eight oar with cox. Though the main rowing activity along the Spree was racing sculls, this club was mainly a touring club. The sculls had relatively high freeboards and some storage space at both ends. Most boats were owned by the club. Some singles, however, were privately owned.

Outside the main hall was a large grassy area where one found tables and chairs. Since kitchen facilities were sparse, most families brought picnic baskets from home. Milk and yogurt were delivered daily and there were small stores within walking distance where essentials were made available. It was here lunch-time as well as "coffee and cake" time were pleasantly spent.

The lawn extended directly to the water's edge where people could bathe or just lie in the sun. The swimming area was separated from the boat launching area by a wooden dock.

When the weather was good, rowing was the major past-time of the members. When it rained, playing the cardgame"skat" occupied most of the men, while bridge filled the day for the women. Tables with men smoking big cigars were a common sight and the only sound heard was that of cards slapping the tables. The favorite refreshment was, of course, Berliner Weisse with raspberry syrup.

In 1937, the name of the club was changed to"Judisher" Ruderclub Oberspree. It was never formally disbanded. As we left Germany in November, 1938, it was still in existence and intact. What happened to it-the property or the wonderful boats and equipment-was never known. No one returned after the war and, after the wall went up, it was in Russian territory and not accessible even if one would have wanted to visit. The last known member, Gustav Segal, passed away in 1992. If there are children who fondly remember the joys of Oberspree, they have not made their presence known. They would probably be in South America, Australia, Europe and the United States. Enclosed are pictures and memorablia of the club since its inception. Unfortunately, we have no record of the names of many members. Hopefully, through the pictures, we have been able to share with you the nostalgia we feel for Oberspree.